

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 001101

SIPDIS

FOR DRL SR. COORDINATOR KLADAKIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ELAB](#) [YE](#) [HUMAN RIGHTS](#) [DEMOCRATIC REFORM](#)

SUBJECT: USG SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN YEMEN

REF: STATE 13796

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

1. In 2002, Embassy Sanaa managed several successful programs that encourage respect for human rights in Yemen, including equal access to education, human rights training for military officers, and 17 small grants focused on grassroots democracy and the development of civil society.

Most notably, during 2002 preparations for the recent national parliamentary elections, the Mission worked closely with major NGOs to support nationwide voter registration programs, the development of political parties, women's political participation (43% of registered voters) and training for effective local governance. These efforts culminated recently with exceptionally high participation (75% of all registered voters) in national elections judged generally free, fair and peaceful by international observers.

-----  
HUMAN RIGHTS - A CRITICAL MISSION OBJECTIVE  
-----

2. Promoting respect for human rights in Yemen is a top Mission priority that directly supports the essential US interests: eradicating terrorism and ensuring stable, democratic governments in the region. Yemen is a poor country with explosive population growth (3.5%), traditional social structures that exclude women, widespread adult illiteracy, troublesome levels of corruption, and radical religious groups. However, it has also been making measurable progress in moving toward democracy, the rule of law, and increased participation for its citizens in an effective civil society.

3. The Embassy's Democracy Working Group (DWG) includes American and FSN members from every Country Team agency. It maintains close contacts with local and international NGOs, as well as other foreign missions working on development and human rights issues. With no direct-hire American USAID officers at post, DWG members work together on Mission human rights agenda. They monitor grants, evaluate proposals, recruit promising candidates for the International Visitors' Program, and visit distant field projects. The Ambassador, the DCM and other officers make human rights issues a regular part of their conversations with leaders in every segment of society.

-----  
EDUCATING NEW LEADERS  
-----

4. Education/Participation: In 2002, USDA PL 416 (B) funded 12.4 million dollars for the construction and furnishing of new primary schools for girls in isolated rural areas. This will provide thousands of young women their first access to modern education and their first entry into civil society. The International Visitors' Program allowed a number of young Yemeni leaders to share and debate US perspectives on such issues as "Women as Political Partners."

5. Military Training: In 2002, Defense Department Counter-Terrorism Fellowship funds (\$450,000) provided many opportunities for promising Yemeni officers and non-commissioned officers to learn increased respect for human rights as an essential element of their professional military studies. These courses, either in the US or directed by US military trainers in Yemen, have produced gratifying results: a marked decrease in cases of human rights abuse by the Yemeni military. The Embassy's Office of Military Cooperation is tracking these results to ensure the most effective training in years to come.

-----  
PROMOTING DEMOCRACY  
-----

6. Small Grants/Big Results: The Embassy's Public Diplomacy Office funded 17 programs throughout Yemen in 2002, totaling almost \$100,000, through the Democracy Small Grants Projects: The individual cost of these programs is small, but the goals are ambitious. For example: to "Educate Society Leaders in

Human Rights Law" ten influential preachers/prayer leaders from mosques throughout the country gathered for a series of workshops on political, civil and constitutional rights guaranteed under Yemen's new Human Rights Law. To combat "Violence Against Women", project leaders drawn from local women's groups worked with officials from several Ministries to raise awareness of the psychological, medical, criminal, cultural and legal roots of these crimes. This 2002 initiative helped lead to the recent establishment of a national network of women's groups helping victims of domestic violence.

17. Training Local Councils: In 2002, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) began an ambitious program to train local councils. Throughout Yemen, local councils control significant resources and provide basic services to Yemen's population: trained members are essential to combat traditional problems of patronage, corruption, and gender bias. The Mission will continue to work closely with NDI on this ongoing project, and seek additional funding for it from the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the Economic Support Fund (ESF) and the Middle East Democracy Fund (MEDF).

18. The Infrastructure of Free Elections: NDI and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) also provided special training in 2002 to strengthen Yemen's multi-party system. Funds from MEPI and MEDF helped support comprehensive technical and organizational assistance to the Government of Yemen. NDI staffers worked directly with local political activists, focusing on women's political participation, voter registration, and local governance.

19. The Results: In the April, 2003 national parliamentary elections, Yemen scored encouraging international marks for organization, participation, and security. The Ambassador and twenty-five Embassy Sanaa staffers joined international election observers from IFES, NDI, the EU and the United Nations, at polling places throughout the country. Although much work remains, 2002 was a year of progress for human rights in Yemen, with positive and measurable results. The Mission will continue to build on that record.

-----  
ADDENDUM  
-----

11. USG funded projects of \$100,000 or more:

a. \$12.4 Million - USDA PL 416 (b): To construct and furnish primary schools for girls in isolated rural areas.

b. \$450,000 - DOD Counter Terrorism Fellowship Funds: Training military officers to highest professional standards, with respect for human rights as an integral part of the curriculum.

c. \$100,000 - DOS/NEA Democracy Small Grants Program: To fund small grassroots projects promoting democratization and civil society.

d. \$1.3 Million - DOS/Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) and the Middle East Development Fund (MEDF): National Democratic Institute (NDI) training for local councils to provide effective services to all citizens, Also, International Federation of Election Systems (IFES), National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute (IRI) training for local party organizers and national election supervisors in all aspects of party organization, voter registration, and conduct of elections.

HULL